THE USE OF ATEJI IN JAPANESE LIGHT NOVEL SEKAI SAIKOU NO ANSATSUSHA ISEKAI KIZOKU NI TENSEI SURU

Fajri Khoerul Umam

Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Mohammad Ali

Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the forms of ateji that appear in light novels based on the theory stated by Shirose (2012). The source of this research comes from Japanese light novel volumes 4-6 'Sekai Saikou No Ansatsusha, Isekai Kizoku Ni Tensei Suru'. This research used a descriptive qualitative method with a note-taking technique. The result is there are 25 ateji found in this novel which is if the same word of ateji appears, are eliminated and the result becomes 20 ateji. 5 classifications match and can be grouped into this classification. From these results, most of the distribution of ateji in the novel is in the classification of foreign languages, followed by the classification of ateji as pronoun, classification of ateji as an pronoun which complement each other, ateji that shows acronyms in foreign languages, and ateji special creation in this novel

Keywords: Ateji, light novel, furigana, Kanji

INTRODUCTION

Japanese writing has 3 types of letters that are used daily. These are hiragana, katakana, and kanji. Kanji is a special character that symbolizes a certain meaning, while hiragana and katakana are simplified letters from the kanji. (Meisha, 2018)

There are furigana that are used to help readers read and understand Japanese kanji. The furigana function itself is intended for children. Generally, children cannot read kanji, but can read hiragana. Furigana is also intended for adults who are used for vocabulary written in uncommon kanji, such as furigana on kanji found in novels or newspapers (Kiky, 2014). However, some furigana shows a different way of reading from the written kanji as an example found in Japanese light novels:

本番(ゆうしゃごろし)と比べれば、あまりにもイージーだが初の暗殺としては悪くない。

Yuusha goroshi to kurabereba, amari ni mo iijii da ga, hatsu no ansatsu toshite wa warukunai

(世界最高の暗殺者,異世界貴族に転生する 1   p.218)

The kanji above has a literal reading of ほんばん, but as can be seen above, the furigana reading affixed to the kanji is not ほんばん but , ゆうしゃごろし. This phenomenon is called ateji.

Ali (2015) states that ateji is one of the various linguistic phenomena in Japanese in the form of writing that is not the literal writing of a vocabulary that makes two different meanings in a vocabulary. Therefore, the question arises as to what kind of ateji's vocabulary in Japanese light novels?

Based on this, this study aims to describe the use of ateji that appears in Japanese light novels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ateji

According to Sasahara (2010), Ateji is the writing of a Japanese word that does not match the literal meaning, jion (onyomi reading) and jikun (kunyomi reading) in general. When viewed from a vocabulary, there is a kanji that is not used in accordance with the reading of the word and does not represent its meaning.

However, the use of ateji today is not only limited to kanji, but can also be alphanumeric symbols.

Ateji Classification

Based on the theory proposed by Shirose (2012), the classification of ateji is divided into 7 types :

1. Ateji that shows how to read in conversational language

For example :

- 早_{はえ}え
- 悪_わりい
- 悪_わいー

The example above is the use of sound changes in pronunciation, lengthening and also abbreviating sounds. This is often seen in everyday conversation as slang by young speakers where the diphthong (/u/) in (るい/rui/) is omitted. This sound change is written as okurigana like the example above.

2. Ateji which shows a word of foreign origin

For example:

- 質_{クオリティ}
- 挑戦_{チャレンジ}

This example is the use of a foreign language applied with a blend of foreign absorption words written in furigana or rubi, and kango and wago. This usage aims to narrow down the meaning written in kanji and rubi which have similar meanings but different word classes.

3. Ateji that stands for abbreviation or acronym in foreign languages

For example :

- H R_{ホームルーム}
- G K_{ゴールキーパー}

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Shirose states that this example of ateji usage is a type of ateji that is commonly found in modern times. This abbreviation is done to unify the meaning contained between written and spoken language. Writing like "H R" is common in print media such as magazines, newspapers and so on. However, the way it is generally read is not literally (エーチアール) but rather (ホームルーム/hoomuruumu).

4. Ateji that shows the use of terms in sports

For example :

- 笛 (ホイッスル)
- 警 告 (イエローカード)

Shirose stated that the theory of using ateji in this classification is that the vocabulary is rarely used by Japanese people. That's why ateji is used, which is a common word for Japanese people, to help understand the text.

5. Ateji as a pronoun

For example :

- 喫煙所 (あそこ)
- 旧校舎 (ここ)

The use of ateji as a pronoun for pointing to a person or thing due to the ambiguity of the direction, place, person, and thing indicated by the pronomina. With this ateji, the meaning indicated by the pronomina becomes clear and narrow.

6. Ateji as a pronoun of expression

For example :

- 大財閥 (ケタチガイ)
- 仕事 (スカウト)

The use of ateji has a context-dependent meaning although it does not have the same meaning relationship. In its use, the ateji and the rubi complement each other, in other words, the kanji is detailed information of what is written in the rubi.

7. Ateji special creation word in literature work

For example :

- 魔 煙 草 (イビルシガレット)
- 東の楽園 (エ デ ン)

This classification of ateji can only be found in one specific literature work, which is with a fantasy or science fiction theme. This type of work generally tells a story about something that happens in an imaginary world, which makes the creation of ateji strengthens the imaginary imagination created in the work.

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METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method using with a note-taking technique. The steps taken by the author to collect data, namely reading and listening to the Japanese light novel 'sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru' volumes 4-6, collecting all ateji found in the light novel into Microsoft Excel tabulations consisting of ateji, furigana, sentences containing ateji, data sources (pages and volumes of the novel) and classifications.

To answer the formulation of the problem in this study, the author classifies the ateji in this Japanese light novels, counts the number of ateji collected, analyzes the ateji based on the classification, and draws conclusions based on the results of the analysis.

The object of this research is a Japanese light novel series entitled 'sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ini tensei suru' volumes 4-6.

Table 1 : List of Japanese light novel which became the object of this research

NO	Title	Author	Genre	Publication date
1	The world's best assassin, To reincarnate in a different world aristocrat 4	Tsukio Rui	Action, Drama, Fantasy, Mystery, Romance	February 27, 2021
2	The world's best assassin, To reincarnate in a different world aristocrat 5	Tsukio Rui	Action, Drama, Fantasy, Mystery, Romance	September 1, 2020
3	The world's best assassin, To reincarnate in a different world aristocrat 6	Tsukio Rui	Action, Drama, Fantasy, Mystery, Romance	April 1, 2020

DISCUSSION

In this study, the ateji used in the Japanese light novel '*sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ini tensei suru*' volumes 4-6 by Rui Tsukiyo used as the data source are summarized in the following table:

Table 2 : ateji found in the novel '*sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ini tensei suru*' volumes 4-6.

Novel	Total	Total (with elimination)
The world's best assassin, To reincarnate in a different world aristocrat 4-6	25	20

This calculation is done to eliminate the occurrence of the same *ateji* in each volume. *The* result obtained is that the number of *ateji* appearing without eliminating the same kanji is 25 ateji, while the number of *ateji* appearing by eliminating the same kanji is 20 ateji.

Ateji will be grouped according to the research conducted by Shirose (2012) which is shown in the following table:

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Table 3 : Grouping of ateji according to Shirose's classification (2012)

no	Ateji classification	amount
1	conversational language in a foreign language	0
2	a word of foreign origin	10
3	acronyms in foreign languages	1
4	terms in sports	0
5	pronoun	6
6	expressive pronouns	6
7	expression of special creation in the work	2
Total		25

The following are details about the ateji used in the Japanese light novel '*sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ini tensei suru*' volumes 4-6,

1. There are no ateji indicating the way of reading in conversational language.

2. There are 10 foreign-derived words found in this novel, including 偶像（アイドル）, 古代道具（アーテイフアクト）, 清蒸（チンジョン） two times, 香菜（シヤンツアイ）, 規則性（ルール） two times, and 魅惑（チャーム） three times

3. This foreign language acronym is found in the novel in only one word, ＨＰ（ホローポイント） which means a bullet with a hole in the end.

4. There is no ateji that shows the use of sports terms because the novel 'sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ini tensei suru' emphasizes the storyline in a fantasy world that focuses on killing the demon king who will destroy the world.

5. Ateji indicated as a pronoun found in this novel amounted to 6 words, including お義母さん（かあ） two times, 俺（ルーグ）, 私（ローマルング）, 暗殺者（おれ）, and お義父さん（とう）.

6. Ateji in place of complementary expressions that provide detailed information in this novel are 6 words, including 本業（あんさつ）, 暗殺（ほんぎよう）, 勇者（ばけもの）, 暗殺術（やりかた）, 人質（クラスメイト）, and 化け物（ゆうしや）.

7. Ateji special creations in this novels are 2 words, there are 一斉砲撃（フルフアイア） and 砲撃斉射（フルフアイア）.

The following is an explanation of the classification of ateji in this novel according to Shirose's classification (2012):

1. Ateji which shows a word of foreign origin

「そうでもないな、通信機を作るのに使った術式はディアが見つけてくれた**規則性**（ルール）があったからこそ作れたんだ。王都でだって大活躍だったじゃないか」

soudemo nai na, tsuushinki wo tsukuru noni tsukatta jutushiki ha dia ga mitsukete kureta ruuru ga atta kara koso tsukurerunda. outo de datte katsuyaku dattanjanai ka

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 5   p.130)

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Between ルール and 規則性, there are similarities in meaning that connect these two words. Literally both words are connected with the meaning of 'rule'. The vocabulary ルール has a narrow meaning, while 規則性 has a rather broad meaning which means a situation where patterns or rules must be followed (kisokusei, 2024). Therefore, this ateji is in accordance with Shirose's (2012) classification, where the ルール vocabulary narrows the meaning of 規則性.

蛇魔族ミーナは強力な<ruby>魅惑<rt>チャーム</rt></ruby>の能力を持つ。
Hebi mazoku miina ha kyouryoku na chaamu no nouryoku o motsu

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 6　p.14)

Between 魅惑 and チャーム there is a common meaning that connects them literally, which is 'attraction'. The vocabulary 魅惑 means to captivate someone's heart in a way that makes them not think rationally (miwaku, 2024). Whereas チャーム here means to attract someone's attention (chaamu, 2024). The vocabulary of チャーム narrows down the meaning of 魅惑 which is in accordance with the classification of Shirose (2012).

2. Ateji that stands for abbreviation or acronym in foreign languages

また、あえて貫通力が劣る <ruby>ＨＰ<rt>ホローポイント</rt></ruby> 弾として完成させてある。
Mata, aete kantsuu-ryoku ga otoru horoo pointodan to shite kansei sa sete aru.

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 6　p.233)

Between ＨＰ and ホローポイント, it can be understood that ＨＰ is a common writing in print media, while the general reading is (ホローポイント/horoopointo) or in English is hollow point which literally means a bullet that has a hole at the end.

3. Ateji as a pronomina

マーハと <ruby>俺<rt>ルーグ</rt></ruby> に繋つながりがあるのはバレても構わない。
Maaha to ruugu ini tsunagari ga aru noha barete mo kamawanai

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 4　p.95)

Between the vocabulary 俺 and ルーグ is a personal pronoun in this novel. The use of this ateji helps the reader in understanding the storyline when reading the novel which becomes clear and narrow with the vocabulary of ルーグ.

「あらあら、それはとっても悲しいですの。でも、<ruby>私<rt>ローマルング</rt></ruby>を敵に回すなんて言っていいのでしょうか？」

Ara ara, sore ha totte mo kanashii desuno. Demo, roomarrungu o teki ini mawasu nante itte ii no deshouka

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 4　p.220)

Between the words 私 and ローマルング, it is the personal pronouns in this novel that narrow down the meaning that these pronomina indicate and become clear.

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4. Ateji as a pronoun of expression

「どこからどうみても罠だ。ご丁寧に、人 質^{クラスメイト}まで用意して」

「どこからどうみても罠だ。ご丁寧に、人 質〔クラスメイト〕まで用意して」

Dochira kara dou mitemo wana da. go teinei ni, kurasumeito made youi shite

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 6   p.138)

Between 人質 and クラスメイト, it is an ateji that complements each other instead of expressing the detailed information of the novel according to the context of the data. In the story, the context of this ateji relates to the classmates of lugh becoming captives as they head to the shrine where they are secretly held captive by the devil.

「君はかしこいですねぇ、そして残酷です。今まであったどんな化け物〔ゆうしゃ〕より」

Kimi ha kashikoi desunee, soshite zannen desu. Ima made atta donna yuusha yori

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 6   p.234)

Between 化け物 and ゆうしゃ, this is also an ateji that complements each other where ゆうしゃ means that this hero has a power beyond human limits whose strength is equal to the demon king he will fight. With such immense power, the ateji 化け物 is used which implies the hero's strength.

5. Ateji which shows the expression of special creation in a work

彼女が言っているのは神槍【グングニル】と【一斉砲撃〔フルフアイア〕】のことだ。

Kanojo ga itteiru no ha shinsou (gunguniru) to (furufaia) no koto da

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 4   p.214)

少々もったいないが、アレを使う。「【砲撃斉射〔フルフアイア〕】」

Shoushou mottainai ga, are o tsukau. (furufaia)

(sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ni tensei suru 5   p.221)

The ateji 一斉砲撃〔フルフアイア〕 and 砲撃斉射〔フルフアイア〕, Both of these ateji have the same meaning which is special creation word in this novel. This ateji means firing a large number of cannons simultaneously using magic. The reader's imagination is strengthened by this ateji.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the presentation of the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the ateji in the Japanese light novel '*sekai saikou no ansatsusha, isekai kizoku ini tensei suru*' volumes 4-6 totaled 25 which when eliminated the ateji whose occurrence was the same, amounted to 20. From the 7 classifications of Shirose (2012), there are 5 classifications that match and can be grouped into this classification. The most of the distribution of ateji in the novel is in the classification of foreign languages, followed by the classification of ateji as pronoun, classification of ateji as an pronoun which complement each other, ateji that shows acronyms in foreign languages, and ateji special creation in this novel.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fajri Khoerul Umam, email: fajri.63820037@mahasiswa.unikom.ac.id

Fajri Khoerul Umam is a student at Universitas Komputer Indonesia pursuing his final year undergraduate degree in Japanese Literature.

Mohammad Ali, MA is a lecturer in the Japanese Literature study program at Universitas Komputer Indonesia who has taken a bachelor's program at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and a master's program at Kanazawa University. He has a research interest in Japanese Education and Japanese Linguistics, especially Japanese Translation.

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